Urban District of Horncastle

ANNUAL REPORT

of the

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

1955

HORNCASTLE URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Annual Report
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Medical Officer of Health
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PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS OF THE COUNCIL

Medical Officer of Health

S. A. O'HIGGIN, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H.

Sanitary Inspector

J. ALLAN FOTTS, A.M.I.S.E., M.S.I.A.
(Resigned 31/4/56)

H. SMITH, A.R.San.I., M.S.I.A.
(Appointed 1/5/56)

The Medical Officer is also Medical Officer for Woodhall Spa Urban District and Horncastle Rural District Councils.

The Sanitary Inspector is also Surveyor, Meat Inspector and Housing, Allotments and Markets Manager.

There is a Public Health Committee which deals with all matters affecting Public Health, other than housing.

Members of Committee:-

R.L. Kisby (Chairman)	E. Kemp
Mrs. M. Robison	F. Townley
F. Goodacre	

To the Chairman and Members
Horncastle Urban District Council.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present my Annual Report for 1955.

1955 has been a year of some satisfaction from the Public Health point of view but complacency remains an ever present danger. Even before the year closed the first cases of dysentery, unrecognised and un-notified were occuring in the near by district. As soon as the schools reassembled in January 1956 the storm broke and the dangers of slackness in domestic hygiene became painfully apparent in many households.

The staff of Holmeleigh deserve special congratulations on their control of the disease in the Homes. Despite the notorious infectivity of sonne dysentery spread within the Homes was very little.

During 1955 the incidence of infectious diseases remained very low.

Housing entered a quiescent phase during the year with the main post-war site completed and the slum-clearance programme not yet under way.

A new housing site comparable with Tennyson Gardens will be difficult to find without incurring great expense or serious difficulties with sewerage, whilst land cleared of old property is a very difficult proposition to redevelop.

May I, once again thank all Officers of the Council for their help during the year.

I am,
Your obedient Servant,

Medical Officer of Health.

STATISTICAL SECTION

AREA OF URBAN DISTRICT:	1421 acres
REGISTRAR GENERAL'S ESTIMATE OF MID-YEAR POPULATION:	3880
DENSITY OF POPULATION PER ACRE:	2.73
SUM REPRESENTED BY INPENY RATE:	£71. 9. 4.
RATEABLE VALUE OF URBAN DISTRICT:	£19634.
NUMBER OF INHABITED HOUSES:	1269
MOVEABLE DWELLINGS LICENCED UNDER PUBLIC HEALTH ACT:	8

VITAL STATISTICS

BIRTHS

Live Births		
Legitimate	Male	28
	Female	38
	Total	66
Illegitimate	Male	1
	Female	-
	Total	1
Total Live Births		67
Crude live birth rate per 1,000 estimated population		17.27
Comparability factor for Horncastle		1.09
Therefore standardized live birth rate per 1,000 estimated population		17.8
Live birth rate, England and Wales per 1,000 estimated population		15.0

Still-births

Legitimate	Male	0
	Female	1
		1

Still-birth rate, Horncastle 16.4 per 1,000 total births

Total still-birth rate, England and Wales 23.1 per 1,000 total births

DEATHS

	Male	28
	Female	19
	Total	47

Crude death rate per 1,000 estimated population	12.1
Standardized death rate per 1,000 estimated population	9.9
Death rate England and Wales per 1,000 estimated population	11.7

Age at Death (years)	Number of Deaths 1955	1954	%age of Total Deaths - 1955
Under 1	2		4.3%
1 - 4	1	1	2.1%
5 - 9	0		
10 - 14	0		
15 - 24	2		4.3%
25 - 34	1		2.1%
35 - 44	0	2	
45 - 54	0	4	
55 - 64	7	3	15%
65 - 74	9	18	19.5%
75 & over	25	24	58%

Causes of Death as shown in the Registrar General's short list.

Short List No.	Cause of Death	Male	Female	Total
1.	Tuberculosis, Respiratory	0	0	0
2.	Tuberculosis, other	0	0	0
3.	Syphilitic disease	0	0	0
4.	Diphtheria	0	0	0
5.	Whooping Cough	0	0	0
6.	Meningococcal Infection	0	0	0
7.	Acute Poliomyelitis	0	0	0
8.	Measles	0	0	0
9.	Other infective and parasitic diseases	0	0	0
10.	Malignant Neoplasm, stomach	2	0	2
11.	Malignant Neoplasm, lung, bronchus	1	0	1
12.	Malignant Neoplasm, breast	1	0	1
13.	Malignant Neoplasm, uterus	0	0	0
14.	Other Malignant and Lymphatic Neoplasms	5	2	7
15.	Leukaemia, Aleukaemia	1	0	1
16.	Diabetes	1	0	1
17.	Vascular lesions of nervous system	0	2	2
18.	Coronary disease, angina	3	2	5
19.	Hypertension with Heart disease	0	1	1
20.	Other Heart Disease	4	5	9
21.	Other circulatory disease	3	0	3
22.	Influenza	0	0	0
23.	Pneumonia	0	1	1
24.	Bronchitis	2	0	2
25.	Other diseases of respiratory system	0	0	0
26.	Ulcer of stomach and duodenum	1	0	1
27.	Gastritis, enteritis and diarrhoea	0	0	0
28.	Nephritis and Nephrosis	0	0	0
29.	Hyperplasia of prostrate	0	0	0
30.	Pregnancy, childbirth, abortion	0	0	0
31.	Congenital malformations	0	0	0
32.	Other defined and ill-defined diseases	3	4	7
33.	Motor Vehicle accidents	1	2	3
34.	All other accidents	1	0	1
35.	Suicide	0	0	0
36.	Homicide and operations of war	0	0	0
	Totals	28	19	47

Causes of Death at Ages below 65 years

Cardio-Vascular Disease	4
Cerebral Embolism	1
Motor Accident	3
Cancer	1
Neonatal Atalectasis	2
Leukaemia	1

Maternal Mortality

NIL

Death rate of infants under one year of age

Total death rate of infants 1955	2 (both in first week of life)
Death rate per 1,000 live births	32
National Infant Mortality rate	24.7 per 1,000 related live births

The fact that the infant mortality is above the National Figure is regrettable but since the numbers being considered are so small the fluctuations from year to year caused by a single death can swing the rate far above or far below the National figure without having any serious significance.

Infectious Diseases

The following notifications were received during the year:-

Dysentery (Salmonellosis)	3
Pneumonia	1
Scarlet Fever and Scarletina	3
Erysipelas	2

No deaths resulted in any of these cases.
There were no notifications of Measles or Whooping Cough.

Preventive Measures

There is a marked preference now for the use of combined protection against Diphtheria and Whooping Cough, as shown by the following figures supplied by the County Medical Officer of Health.

All children under 5 years of age:

	1955	1954
Diphtheria protection only	8	34
Whooping Cough protection only	4	14
Combined Diphtheria and Whooping Cough	28	2
Smallpox Vaccination	31	17

The awakening of concience thus shown is most satisfactory although it has to be remembered that at most, less than half the babies born in Horncastle have any protection.

At the moment of writing the first batch of children to receive poliomyelitis vaccination have just been given their first injection and no upsets have been reported.

The Poliomyelitis vaccination scheme will of course, involve much of your Medical Officer's time when it is resumed although the larger numbers are likely to be more efficiently administered so the more children are dealt with with less travelling.

Food Poisoning

In the summer there was a small outbreak of food poisoning in which the rat-borne salmonella typhi-murium was responsible. A common factor was the supply of raw T.T. milk and the farm was visited and its hygienic state dealt with. Nevertheless, one must continue to emphasize that only pasteurized or sterilized milk is safe.

Food hygiene in catering establishments is very much in the news - and rightly so, as we in Horncastle in 1956 have begun to learn to our cost: In winter 1955/56 a major epidemic of sonne dysentery developed in Coningsby and soon spread to Horncastle.

Comment from the Public Health Laboratory suggested that these were not localized outbreaks and that cases were occurring up and down the Country although by no means all were either bacteriologically confirmed or even notified to the respective Medical Officers of Health.

Dysentery is usually a disease of contaminated food and that is true to some extent to the present outbreak, although predominantly faulty training of children (few of whom can be relied upon to wash their hands after using the W.C.) has been the principal mode of spread.

Tuberculosis

There were no notifications of, or deaths from tuberculosis during the year.

FOOD

Meat Inspection

During 1955 the Council maintained a Public Slaughterhouse in Prospect Street and a considerable proportion of the meat consumed in and around Horncastle was killed and examined there. A close approach to 100% inspection was achieved before and after killing. In every case the carcase was examined.

The importance of this is emphasized by a finding of some 12% of cattle and 9% of pigs were tuberculous and a similar proportion suffering from other diseases. This, it should be noted, is in spite of the purchase by skilled butchers of apparently first-class animals, showing no external evidence of disease.

One alarming episode occurred when a calf suffering from anthrax was unwittingly admitted to the slaughterhouse and dressed. This, of course, necessitated the destruction by fire of all the meat hanging in the slaughter hall and a most rigorous programme of disinfection and cleaning of the premises.

At about the same time there were other suspected cases in the surrounding district in which again rigorous precautions were taken.

During the year, anxiety and confusion was apparent from the lack of Government advice on future development of the meat trade.

Other foods

There was a slight rise in the amount of unfit foods surrendered. The increase being mainly imported carcase meat.

Fish

The position has changed little during the year, the quality being satisfactory but the variety poor. One can hardly blame traders for not stocking what they cannot sell, but do they always show initiative in occasionally offering different varieties?

It would be regrettable if the rising generation thought no more of fish than tinned pilchards, 'fish and chips' or the rather dull steamed fish sometimes encountered in school canteens.

Ice Cream

Only one producer remains in Horncastle, accounting only for a small proportion of the total sales.

Sampling results were generally satisfactory and the two samples not up to Grade I, may well have been due to some delay in transit to the laboratory, for no local explanation was found.

Meat Products

During the year under review premises for manufacture of meat products were not adequately inspected owing to the Inspector's heavy commitments. Informal inspection by myself, usually at times of purchasing, have not revealed any serious contraventions.

Milk Supplies

The position remained unchanged during 1955. The cost of processing milk from farm to consumer is a serious obstacle to improvement and a significant quantity of milk is neither designated nor heat-treated. Perhaps the worst feature of this is the use of raw undesignated milk in cafes, etc., where the management are taken on trust by their patrons who then give their children unsafe milk to drink. Cafe proprietors would be wise to use only pasteurized milk for the extra cost is trivial whilst a childs life is priceless.

Water Supply

The co-operation between Horncastle Water Company and the Rural District Council has maintained an adequate supply throughout the very dry summer.

Regular sampling of the water has given entirely satisfactory results.

Swimming Bath

The bath was extremely popular during the long hot summer and although it still lacks the amenity of continuous filtration, it has proved safe and valuable to the comunity. The adjacent land has now been acquired by the Council to improve the amenities. As finances permit, the Council intend to proceed steadily with improvements.

Sewage Disposal

The combined foul and rainwater sewer system has very largely reached the limit of its capacity so that, to avoid surcharging of sewers, future policy will aim at diverting rain water from the sewage works. Even so, the loading of the sewers is a serious factor in finding housing sites.

The settlement tank has been emptied and examined and appears little the worse for 60 years of use although it is now overloaded by the increased flow. The filter beds at Dalderby cope with the dry weather flow, but stormwater overflows come into action after any appreciable rainfall.

The decision whether major works will be required on the system may well depend upon the extent to which rain water can be excluded and inward leakage of soil water checked. One major inward leak was discovered and remedied during the year.

Refuse Disposal

There is steady progress towards the filling-in of the water filled claypit at the base of the controlled tip, but it will be some years before a completely dry tip is achieved. Nevertheless there is no practical alternative to the use of this site. A weekly collection of house refuse has been well maintained.

FOOD AND DRUGS ACT, 1955

There has been no significant change in the number or distribution of food premises during the year and there were no circumstances which gave rise to any serious anxiety.

The effect of the Food and Drugs Act of 1955 and the Regulations made under it will, however, impose some stringent requirements upon all in the food trade and will call for searching inspections at the outset, with the probability of much time being required of the Council's Officers in assisting traders in understanding the requirements imposed upon them, and advising upon practical measures for compliance.

There are special difficulties in Horncastle owing to the dense crowding of business into converted dwelling houses. These cannot be regarded as grounds for obtaining certificates of exemption.

In the case of the open Market, the Council are accepting the duty of providing hot water washing facilities for stall-holders. At present, apart from fruit and vegetables all food-stuffs offered on the market are pre-wraped.

As mentioned last year, there is an increase in demand for frozen food-stuffs and also in the number of retailers of them.

REPORT OF WORK DONE BY SANITARY INSPECTOR DURING THE YEAR

HOUSING

Total Number of new houses erected during the year:-

(i)	By Local Authority	26
(ii)	By other Local Authorities	-
(iii)	By other bodies or persons	-

Housing Repairs and Rents Bill:-

No of certificates of disrepair issued following applications by tenants served with rent increase notices (Sec. 26)	-

Inspection of dwelling houses during the year:-

(a)	Total number of dwelling houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts)	878
(b)	Number of inspections made for the purpose	934

Remedy of defects during the year without service of formal notice:-

Number of defective dwelling houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by local authority or their officers	11

ACTION UNDER STATUTORY POWERS DURING THE YEAR:-

(a) Proceedings under Sec. 9 & 10 of the Housing Act, 1936:-
(1) No of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs -
(2) No of dwelling houses which were rendered fit after service of formal notices
(a) by owners - (b) by Local Authority -

(b) Proceedings under Public Health Acts:-
(1) No of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied -
(2) No of dwelling houses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices -
(a) by owners - (b) by Local Authority -

(c) Proceedings under Secs. 11 & 13 of the Housing Act, 1936:-
(1) No of dwelling houses in repsect of which Demolition Orders were made -
(2) No of dwelling houses demolished in persuance of Demolition Orders -
(3) No of dwelling houses subject to undertakings or Closing Orders -

(d) Proceedings under Sec. 12 of the Housing Act, 1936:-
(1) No of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were made -
(2) No of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were determined the tenement or rooms having been rendered fit -

(e) Proceedings under Secs. 25 & 26:-
(1) No of clearance orders made -
(2) No of dwelling houses demolished in persuance thereof -

HOUSING ACT, 1936 - PART IV - OVERCROWDING

(a) (1) No of cases of overcrowding relieved during the year 3
(2) No of persons concerned in such cases 17

(b) (1) No of dwellings overcrowded at end of the year Not Known
(2) No of families dwelling therein -
(3) No of persons dwelling therein -

HOUSING ACT, 1949:-
(a) No of applications for grants received 1
(b) No of grants made -
(c) No of applications for grants made by Local Authority -

MOVEABLE DWELLINGS, TENTS, VANS, etc:-

No of Site Licences	-
No of individual licences	8
Total number of caravans permitted under licences	8
No of inspections during year - Sites	-
- Dwellings	6
No of contraventions remedied	-

FOOD PREMISES

Bakehouses

No in district	6
No of inspections	5
No of contraventions	1
Defects remedied	1

Milk Supplies

No of distributors on register - Sterilized	3
- Pasteurized	2
- T.T.	2
- Non-Designated	3
No of samples of milk taken in course of delivery	-
No of inspections of dairy premises	8
Contraventions remedied	-

Ice Cream

No of manufacturers on register	1
No of premises registered for sale of ice cream	17
No of inspections of premises made	22
No of contraventions found	-
Defects remedied	-
No of samples taken - Grade I	14
- Grade II	1
- Grade III	1
- Grade IV	-

Meat Products

No of premises registered for manufacture of Meat Products	6
No of inspections made	7
No of contraventions found	2
Defect remedied	2

Other Food Premises

No of inspections	18
No of contraventions found	1
Defects remedied	1

Slaughterhouses

No licenced - Abattoir type	-
Private (individual)	-
No operated by Local Authority	1

UNSOUND FOOD

CARCASES INSPECTED AND CONDEMNED

	Cattle excluding cows	Cows	Calves	Sheep and Lambs	Pigs
Number killed (if known)	332	33	56	622	953
Number inspected	332	33	56	622	953
All diseases except tuberculosis Whole carcases condemned	6	-	2	1	4
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	48	9	1	19	24
Percentage of number inspected affected with disease other than tuberculosis	16.3	27.3	5.4	3.2	2.9
Tuberculosis only Whole carcases condemned	-	-	1	-	1
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned	39	4	-	-	82
Percentage of the number inspected affected with tuberculosis	11.8	12.1	1.8	-	8.7

OTHER FOODS CONDEMNED

Food	Home Produce	Imported
Imported Meat	-	155 lbs
Tinned Meat and Fish	2 lbs	27 "
Tinned Fruit	17 "	7 "
Tinned Vegetables	9 "	63 "
Misc. Tins	10 "	1 "
Dry Goods	34 "	-
Total	72 "	253 "

Method of disposal of condemned food:-

1 Anthrax carcase and all contacts destroyed by fire.
Other Meat to Messrs. Wings, Boston.
Other foods buried at tip.

DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE

Closets

No of houses with privy vaults in district	-
No of houses with pail closets in district	45
No of houses with water closets in district	Not Known
No of water closets substituted for pail closets or privy vaults	-

Cesspools and Septic Tanks

No of cesspools and septic tanks emptied, cleansed etc.	-
No of cesspools and septic tanks abolished	-

WATER SUPPLIES

Domestic

No of houses supplied from Public mains - In house	955
- standpipe	291
No of houses supplied from private sources - in house	-
- not in house	23
New sources of supply - public	-
- private	-
No of public supplies closed as polluted	-
for other reasons	-
Any part requiring a public supply or the replacement of public supply for health reasons	-
No of samples taken for chemical examination	Nil
No of samples taken for bacteriological examination Class I	51
other Classes	Nil

Swimming Pools

No of public swimming pools in operation	1
No fitted with continuous mechanical filtration and chlorination	Chlorination only
No of samples of swimming pool water taken for bacteriological examination - Satisfactory	2
- Not Satisfactory	-

GENERAL

Offensive trades

No of premises in district	1
No of inspections	1
Contraventions remedied	-

Knackers Yards

No licenced	-
No of inspections	-
Contraventions remedied	-

Shops Act, 1950.

No of shops inspected	12
Contraventions remedied	-

Disinfection, etc.

Rooms disinfected: (a) ordinary infectious diseases	-
(b) tuberculosis	-
No of premises disinfected	-

Refuse Collection and Disposal

No of premises from which refuse is collected	1532
Frequency of collection	weekly
Method of disposal	Part controlled tipping: Part tipping in water
Is this satisfactory?	Tipping in water unsatisfactory
Is collection by Local Authority or Contract	Local Authority

Nuisances

Total No of nuisances during the year	15
(1) Abated as result if informal action by Sanitary Inspector	14
(2) Reported to Council - Statutory Notice issued	-
- " " not issued	1

Details of nuisances abated

	After informal Intimation	After Statutory Notice
Smoke	2	-
Accumulation of Refuse	3	-
Foul ditches, ponds and stagnant water	1	-
Fowls, pigs and other animals	4	-
Housing:- (included as defects remedied under Public Health Acts.)	-	-
Dampness	-	-
Dangerous Premises	-	-
Drainage	1	-
Other	-	-
Miscellaneous Nuisances	3	-

Rats and mice destruction

No of rodent operatives employed	2 part time
No of premises treated (a) dwelling houses	40
(b) other premises	18
Are there any serious reservoirs of rats in the district?	No.

Appendix A.

HOUSING REPAIRS AND RENTS ACT, 1954.

Return of Proposals in accordance with Part I of the Act and Circular 55/54

Total number of permanent dwellings in the local authority's area		1269
Part I	The total problem	
(i)		
(i)	Estimated number of houses unfit for human habitation within the meaning of Sec. 9 of the Housing Repairs and Rents Act, 1954, and suitable for action under Sec. 11 or 25 of the Housing Act, 1936.	380
(ii)	Period in years which the Council think necessary for securing the demolition of all the houses in (i)	20
Part II	Orders already made etc.	
(iii)	Number of houses in (i) in clearance areas and already covered by operative or compulsory purchase orders or owned by the Local authority	Nil
(iv)	Number of houses which are already in c clearance areas and for which clearance or compulsory purchase orders have been submitted to the Minister but have not yet become operative	Nil
Part III	Action in forst five years	
(v)	Number of houses which are already in clearance areas and for which clearance or compulsory purchase orders are to be made or which are to be purchased by agreement within the five years	Nil
(vi)	Number of houses which are to be included in clearance areas still to be declared and which within the five years will be owned by the Local authority or will have been included in a clearance order or compulsory purchase order submitted to the Minister	95
(vii)	Number of houses under (iii), (iv), (v) and (vi) to be patched (if necessary) and retained within the five years under Sec. 2 of the Housing Repairs and Rents Act, 1954 for temporary accommodation	-

(viii)	Number of houses under (iii), (iv), (v) and (vi) to be demolished in the five years	85
(ix)	Number of houses (including those already comprised in operative demolition orders) to be demolished in the five years as a result of action under Sec. 11 of the Housing Act, 1936.	10

FACTORIES ACT, 1937 & 1948

1. INSPECTIONS for purposes of provision as to health (including inspections made by Sanitary Inspector).

Premises	Number on Register	Number of Inspections	Written notices	Occupiers Prosecuted
(i) Factories in which Sec. 1 - 4 and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authority	7	5	-	-
(ii) Factories not included in (i) In which Sec.7 is enforced by Local Authority	42	62	-	-
(iii) Other premises in which Sec. 7 is enforced by the Local Authority	1	36	-	-
TOTAL	50	103	-	-

CASES IN WHICH DEFECTS WERE FOUND

Particulars	No of cases in which defects were found				No of cases in which prosecutions were instituted
	Found	Remedied	Referred To H.M. Inspector	Referred By H.M. Inspector	
Want of cleanliness	-	-	-	-	-
Overcrowding	-	-	-	-	-
Unreasonable temperature	-	-	-	-	-
Inadequate ventilation	-	-	-	-	-
Ineffective drainage of floors	1	1	-	-	-
Sanitary conveniences:					
(a) insufficient	-	-	-	-	-
(b) unsuitable or defective	1	1	-	-	-
(c) not separate for sexes	-	-	-	-	-
Other offences against the Act	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	2	2	-	-	-